

weeks more dissidents reportedly have been receiving long sentences. Ms. Suu Kyi's party is in a tough spot: It can boycott the convention as a sham and be accused by the regime of being noncooperative, or it can legitimize a sham. Either way, the Yangon generals again seem to be stringing along the world.

All this speaks to the need for the U.S. Senate to act quickly to renew import sanctions placed on Myanmar goods after Ms. Suu Kyi was rearrested last year. And this time, sanctions must be followed by a U.S. diplomatic campaign—with the generals, their Southeast Asian apologists and the U.N. Security Council—that will be more strongly focused on forcing the junta to begin sharing power.

Ms. Suu Kyi has deservedly gained world renown as a symbol of the Burmese quest for freedom, but she also is just one of 50 million people who remain under this regime's lock and key.

[From the Nation]

#### NOW IS THE TIME FOR ACTION ON BURMA

(By Tashika Elbegdorj)

Nobody should be clinking champagne glasses over the recent announcement that Burma's National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi, has tentatively accepted an invitation to attend the national convention being organized by the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). If this is to be a credible process, the regime must first meet a number of reasonable demands by the NLD—something the ruling junta has never done in the past. Now is the time to step up pressure on Rangoon to ensure the NLD's demands are met and to prevent another attempt by the SPDC to place a veneer of democracy over their brutal rule.

Beginning a so-called process of national reconciliation and charting a way out of Burma's political impasse without the full participation of Suu Kyi and the NLD (as a party and not as individuals) is destined to failure. The legitimacy of the NLD cannot be denied. The Burmese people overwhelmingly elected NLD candidates in 1990 to represent them in parliamentary elections the SPDC refuses to recognize.

Few regimes in the world are as repugnant as the SPDC led by Senior General Than Shwe. Human rights reports and documentation by international organizations such as the United Nations have catalogued a long series of horrors the ruling regime inflicts on its people. For example, the SPDC demands forced labor from its citizens, uses rape as a weapon of fear and intimidation against ethnic groups, fills its jails with political prisoners and torture and summary executions are common. In one of the greatest crimes against our youth, Human Rights Watch reports that nearly 70,000 child soldiers, some as young as 11, have been dragooned into the Burma army.

That the regime attempts to justify its behavior by talking about "managed democracy" and the "Asian way to democracy" is an outrage. The fact that Burma's regional neighbors look the other way while making pretenses about "internal affairs" is a stain on all Asians—and this must change.

The SPDC's national convention continues a process begun in 1995 to guarantee a future constitution that cements the military's role in power. Statements by senior SPDC officials that this convention will pick up where the last one left off demonstrates a striking lack of sincerity and strongly indicates that this exercise has nothing to do with democracy and everything to do with dictatorship.

The Burmese people are not the only victims of the regime. Burma's neighbors also

suffer. In Thailand, the junta's actions have forced tens of thousands of refugees across the Thai-Burma border. Methamphetamine, or *ya ba* as it is known locally, wash into Thailand from Burma, saddling Thai social services with skyrocketing addiction rates and increased crime. China is battling an HIV-AIDS epidemic that has its roots in Burma's opium smuggling. Regionally, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), who have long provided Burma's generals with political cover, are forced to pick up the tab for the regime's behavior. Meetings with the U.S. and EU officials that should be focused on enhancing economic, security and social ties are instead devoted to explaining the outrageous actions of a brutal regime. This tension is a drag on the region.

It is time for Asian governments to realize that it is time to get tough with Burma's thugs. After expending considerable political capital and prestige, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra received a slap in the face when the junta refused to participate in a second meeting of the Bangkok Process, a mechanism he put in place to allow the regime to brief the international community on its road map to democracy and national convention.

Thaksin has bent over backwards to curry favor with Burma's generals by cracking down on Burmese refugees and democracy activists promoting non-violence in their opposition to the SPDC. Thaksin should communicate strongly to the regime that they will not find solace or cover with his government. Allowing Burmese democracy activists to meet and organize in Thailand would serve to demonstrate his commitment to freedom in Thailand as well as sending a strong signal to the regime that their actions are unacceptable and their support waning. Asean could take the step of suspending Burma's membership in the regional grouping putting the SPDC on notice they are unwilling to foot the rising political and financial bill for the regime's acts of violence and abuse.

A peaceful Burma holds the promise of returning refugees, addressing narcotics smuggling, and investing in a social infrastructure that can unleash the talents and potential of the people. This will create a huge new economic market for Asean and be a catalyst for further development in an environment of peace and stability. None of this will exist under the SPDC.

It is testimony to the bravery of the Burmese people that despite the regime's oppression and terror they are unable to subdue the country's democracy movement. The strength of the movement lies in its legitimacy and the demand by the country for governance derived from the will of the people. It is long past time for Asian governments to hear their call and take the actions necessary for a peaceful transition of power that can begin to heal this torn land.

#### MURDER OF NICHOLAS BERG

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I join my colleagues and the American people in expressing outrage at the vicious murder of American citizen Nicholas Berg in Iraq. I extend my sincere sympathy to Mr. Berg's family and friends, who have had to confront a terrible loss in the context of a barbaric public display.

No one should be misled by the claims of the terrorists responsible for this atrocity. They purport to be retaliating for the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers. But this is

a lie. These people seek to kill us and kill our children because that is at the core of their agenda, because they derive power from inspiring fear and horror. They do not need a pretext for their brutality.

We express our disgust at the scandalous treatment of Iraqi prisoners because our country stands for basic principles, for the rule of law, for the dignity of the individual. We hold ourselves to high standards, and generations of Americans have shed blood to protect those standards and uphold our principles. We do not call for an investigation of these prisoner abuses in the hopes of placating terrorists. We call for an investigation and for full accountability because that is the right thing to do.

And in the broader fight against terrorism, we speak, wisely, of the need to win hearts and minds in the Arab and Muslim worlds, where millions of good and decent people question American intentions and actions. We insist, quite rightly, that the basic norms and standards of conduct embodied in the Geneva Convention not be undermined, because those same Conventions protect our own troops when they are in harm's way. But our efforts are not aimed to influence the behavior of terrorists. No one has any illusions about the nature of these people. We will not change their minds, or win their hearts, or convince them to uphold basic standards in their conduct. One has only to recall the horror of September 11, or consider the murder of Nicholas Berg, to be certain about that.

#### LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

On April 6, 2000, in Ashland, OR, Michael Susee was charged with intimidation and assault for allegedly attacking three gay men while yelling anti-gay remarks.

Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. By passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

#### PEACE OFFICERS MEMORIAL DAY AND NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise today to remember and pay tribute to those from my home State who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. I sincerely believe we must never forget those who have given their lives to protect us all.